

THE BRITISH ACADEMY

ANNUAL LECTURE ON A MASTER-MIND

HENRIETTE HERTZ TRUST

Aristotle

By

John Burnet

Fellow of the Academy

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CLASSICS

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By JOHN BURNET

FELLOW OF THE ACADEMY

Read July 2, 1924

THERE is hardly any philosopher but Aristotle of whom it is so true to say that he is hard to interpret just because he insists on discussing all the side issues of not very fundamental points, while what strike us as the real problems are dismissed in an oracular sentence. Nevertheless, one cannot help feeling that this is due, at least to some extent, to the curious way in which his teaching has been handed down to us. As we shall see, his whole career as an independent philosopher was exceptionally short. What are now called the works of Aristotle are, in the main, his own personal manuscripts which he used as a foundation for his lectures. It is not, therefore, surprising that those points of which he felt most sure should only be briefly indicated, while minor difficulties are discussed with great minuteness. Moreover, it is of the first importance to notice that what we call the works of Aristotle were entirely unknown for more than two hundred years after his death, and were then recovered almost by accident. On the other hand, the numerous works which he published during his lifetime, and by which alone he was known after his death, have almost entirely disappeared. That is the problem with which I have been occupied for some years now, and indeed it has been obvious for some time that it was one which had to be solved before anything else could be done. I was not therefore surprised to find that it formed the subject of a new book by Professor Werner Jaeger of Berlin which only came into my hands in the present year.¹ The great merit of this work is that it abandons the untenable idea that the published works of Aristotle are all to be referred to his earlier life, while the unpublished lectures which we have belong to the time when he was at the head of the Lyceum at Athens. I venture to think, however, that Jaeger has not allowed sufficiently for the shortness of this Athenian period nor

¹ *Aristoteles, Grundlegung einer Geschichte seiner Entwicklung* (Berlin, 1923).

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for the sudden way in which it was brought to an end. To me it seems rather that Aristotle's work was quite unfinished when he died in exile at the comparatively early age of sixty-two. I shall come back to that point later; for the present I shall confine myself to what we know of the first two periods of his life. But first it will be necessary to consider carefully the evidence for the distinction I have drawn between the published works and the manuscripts of the lectures which were not recovered till the first century B.C.

I

Let us consider first the history of the works we still have. Strabo tells us that Aristotle's successor Theophrastus had left them to Neleus of Scepsis in the Troad, and that he bequeathed them to his successors, who were not philosophers, though they knew the value of the manuscripts very well. Indeed, they kept them locked up in a cellar to preserve them from the kings of Pergamus, who were searching for books in order to rival the collection at Alexandria. Ultimately they were sold to Apellicon of Teos for a large sum, and he edited them in a very imperfect manner. Soon after, in 87 B.C., Sulla took Athens and carried the library of Apellicon to Rome, where Tyrannio endeavoured to produce a more correct edition. Ultimately, the manuscripts passed into the hands of Andronicus of Rhodes, and were published by him towards the end of the first century B.C.¹

Now, there is not the slightest reason to doubt this very definite statement. It will be noted that it does not in the least suggest that the manuscripts in question were unknown to Theophrastus. Indeed, it is distinctly implied that they were not, since we are told that the lectures of Theophrastus himself formed part of his bequest to Neleus of Scepsis. Moreover, Strabo had exceptional opportunities of being well informed on the point. He was a native of Pontus and, on his mother's side, related to its kings; he was also a pupil of Tyrannio, no doubt at Rome, so he could hardly have been ignorant of the discovery of what we call the works of Aristotle. We cannot really doubt, then, that these works were quite unknown from the time of Theophrastus till the first century B.C.²

This does not mean, of course, that no works of Aristotle were known during that period, but only that the treatises which make up

¹ Strabo, xiii. 608; Plutarch, *Sulla* 26. 1.

² Zeller (*Eng. Trans.*, vol. i, pp. 147 sqq.) is very anxious to disprove this, but he really only succeeds in showing that Theophrastus and Eudemus knew the lectures of Aristotle, which is perfectly consistent with what Strabo says.

our texts were never intended for publication, and were not in fact published. In one place,¹ Cicero speaks of 'the golden stream of speech that Aristotle poured forth', which certainly does not strike us as a natural description of our Aristotle, especially if we remember that Cicero's literary taste was distinctly more florid than ours. The truth is rather that Aristotle published many works which, of course, escaped the fate of the cellar at Scepsis, and it was of them that Cicero was speaking. No doubt he knew something of our Aristotle too; for he was the patron of Tyrannio, but it is hardly probable that he had read much of him. When he speaks of Aristotle, he means chiefly the works Aristotle himself had published in his lifetime, and these have in large measure disappeared. Those, on the other hand, which were recovered from the cellar at Scepsis in Cicero's day were ultimately seen to give a truer view of Aristotle's philosophy in its developed form than the published works which had alone been hitherto known, and these have, therefore, failed to survive. Unfortunately, this has made it far more difficult for us to give an intelligible account of Aristotle's philosophical development, and that is what is of most interest to-day. It is the case, however, that very considerable portions of Aristotle's published works have only been identified in recent years, and this has made the problem a little easier.

The contrast between Plato and Aristotle in this respect is in many ways striking. We know now that the best known works of Plato were published when he was a young man and long before the foundation of the Academy, and it becomes more and more impossible to doubt that their chief purpose was to preserve the memory of the teaching of Socrates. The dialogues which he published after the foundation of the Academy are different in this respect, and, in particular, in the place assigned to Socrates, who more and more takes a secondary place until, in the *Laws*, he disappears altogether. It does not seem probable that Plato ever wrote his lectures; for the Academy remained faithful to its founder's memory, and there is no reason to doubt that we still possess every word that Plato ever wrote. With Aristotle the case is very different. He too wrote a large number of works for the public, and it was by these alone he was known for several generations. He also gave lectures for over twenty years, and it is the manuscripts of these lectures that were discovered in the first century B.C.

The result has been, on the whole, unfortunate. Certainly, we may be glad that Aristotle found it necessary to write his lectures; for otherwise we should have known as little of his most intimate con-

¹ *Acad.* ii. 38. 119.

victions as we do of Plato's. The earliest commentators knew, of course, that the collection of treatises called the *Metaphysics* was by Aristotle, but were quite at a loss to account for the serious differences between that and the published works which had long been known. Indeed, before long the view was held that these published works were merely exercises in Platonic philosophy, and could not be regarded as evidence for the beliefs of Aristotle himself. On the other hand, the unpublished manuscripts which had been recovered from the cellar at Scepsis were the manuscripts from which Aristotle had lectured, and were therefore the only authority for his actual teaching. If we had only the lectures given by Plato in the Academy and the published works of Aristotle, we should still, no doubt, be able to see that Plato was a born writer, while Aristotle was not, but we should have a far more mathematical Plato and a considerably more popular Aristotle. As it is, we have only so much of Plato's philosophy as he thought it well to publish, while what we now have of Aristotle is almost entirely the lectures given in his school. Most of his published work has only a shadowy existence to-day and has to be reconstructed by inference. The only fairly complete specimen we possess is the *Constitution of Athens* discovered about a generation ago, which certainly belongs to Aristotle's later years, and must, in fact, have been written between 329/8 and 327/6 B.C.¹ This shows that Aristotle continued to publish all through his life, and the manuscripts discovered at Scepsis are also of various dates and have not been finally revised. That, as has been said, is Professor Jaeger's chief contribution to the subject. It would of course be impossible to discuss here in detail the chronological arrangement which he adopts, though I have no doubt that he is right in refusing to assign all these works, as is generally done, to the last thirteen years of Aristotle's life, when he was at the head of the Lyceum at Athens. According to him, they belong largely to the intermediate period, shortly after Plato's death, when Aristotle had left Athens, and are therefore contemporary with, or even earlier than, a good many of his published works. It will therefore be best to go through the three well marked periods of Aristotle's life, that of his membership of the Academy, that of his absence in Asia Minor and Macedonia, and that of his return to Athens, and to see, at least in broad outline, how much of his work is to be referred to each of these. This makes it necessary to consider what we know of Aristotle's life.

¹ See Jaeger, *op. cit.*, p. 350, n. 1. He adopts Mr. Torr's date for reasons which seem to be conclusive.

II

In the first place Aristotle was not an Athenian but an Ionian. It is, indeed, one of the most remarkable facts about Greek philosophy that it was hardly Athenian at all. It began at Miletus in Ionia; but, from the time of Pythagoras, it had an independent centre in the Ionian and Achæan cities of southern Italy and Sicily. It was not till the age of Pericles that it was brought to Athens by Anaxagoras from the east and by Parmenides and Zeno from the west, and was there given a fresh start by Socrates, whose work we know at first hand from Plato alone. These two are, no doubt, the greatest names in the history of Greek philosophy, but we should never forget that theirs are the only Athenian names of the first rank. By the time Plato founded the Academy, the great days of Athens were at an end, and he had already to look abroad for the realization of his political views. When, more than a generation later, Aristotle founded his school in the Lyceum, he did so under Macedonian patronage, and more because Athens was the natural meeting-place for Ionians than for any other reason. The number of born Athenians in the Academy had been small, so far as we know, and in the Lyceum it was smaller still. Nevertheless, it was to Athens that men came from all parts of the Greek world to study philosophy, though they knew little, and cared little, for Athenian politics. Aristotle, who was the contemporary of Demosthenes, only mentions him twice or thrice in his *Rhetoric*. Indeed, now that Aristotle's treatise on the Athenian Constitution, a work which belongs to the last period of his life, has been recovered, we can see for ourselves how little he really understood Athenian politics.

Aristotle was born at Stagirus (or, as it came to be called, Stagira), on the east of the peninsula of Chalcidice, in 384/3 B.C. His father, Nicomachus, was a medical man and had been court physician to the king of Macedon. Aristotle's son, who was born in his later years, was called after his grandfather in accordance with Greek custom, but that is practically all we know about the family. His father must have died when Aristotle was quite young; for the next thing we hear about him is that his guardian, Proxenus, sent him to study at Athens in 367/6 B.C. when he was seventeen years old. It was certainly not to study medicine that he went there, but simply because it was the natural place for an Ionian youth of intellectual ambition to go. At that time the Platonic Academy was really the only centre of higher study in Greece. It is important to note that Eudoxus, the astronomer, seems to have come to Athens about the same time, and to have

brought his pupils with him. From the *Nicomachean Ethics*, which was written long afterwards, we can see that Aristotle still looked up to Eudoxus with reverence. What is of even more importance is that, when Aristotle first joined the Academy, Plato was apparently not there. It was just about this time (368/7 B.C.) that Dionysius I, tyrant of Syracuse, died and that Plato, on the urgent recommendation of Dio, went to Syracuse to look after the education of Dionysius II. His second visit to Sicily took place in 361 B.C., and he did not return to Athens till the next year. Even then, he was not done with Syracuse. In 357 B.C. Dio returned to Sicily from exile and made himself master of Syracuse. Plato (who was seventy years old) did not accompany him, but several members of the Academy did, in particular his nephew Speusippus and Eudemus of Cyprus, and a period of troubles began. Callippus, who was also a member of the Academy, murdered Dio, and Plato wrote two long letters, which still exist,¹ to the friends and partisans of Dio, in which he defended himself and gave them advice. We can see from all this that, for the first ten years of Aristotle's membership, the personal influence of the head of the Academy on him must have been slight and intermittent, and even when he came back to Athens, Plato was chiefly occupied in writing the *Laws*, a work which was not published till after his death, and in delivering lectures which were largely mathematical. It is not easy to see how Aristotle could follow him in this direction. There is no evidence that he was ever capable of appreciating the strictly mathematical point of view. Above all, we know now that the Plato to whose school Aristotle belonged for twenty years was no longer the Plato who wrote the *Republic*. That great work was probably finished before he founded the Academy, and certainly a good many years before Aristotle joined it. Even the *Parmenides* and the *Theaetetus* were, to all appearance, written before Aristotle came to Athens, and there is a gap in Plato's literary work about this time.

Nevertheless, there can be no doubt at all that the influence of Plato on Aristotle was very great indeed. That follows at once from the fact that he remained a member of the Academy until Plato's death, that is, for a period of twenty years. There is no doubt, in particular, that he read all Plato's earlier writings and, in particular, the *Phaedo*, which made a deep impression upon him. To him, of course, Socrates was little but a name. It is improbable that, in his time, any member of the Academy remembered him or knew him otherwise than as he did, that is, as the chief figure in the works of Plato's youth. When Aristotle joined the Academy, it was more than

¹ *Epp.* vi and vii.

a generation since Socrates had been put to death, and there were very few Athenian members left. The memory of a teacher who wrote nothing is soon forgotten. What is certain is that Aristotle found in Plato's earlier works something new and, from his point of view, of the first importance. It would hardly be going too far to say that during the first period of his membership of the Academy, Aristotle was more of a Socratic than a Platonist, or at least that he held views which were certainly to be found in Plato's Socratic dialogues, but which were hardly of first-rate importance in his later teaching.

From this point of view it is extremely significant that one of his earliest works was the dialogue entitled *Eudemus*, which was substantially based on the *Phaedo*. The theme of this dialogue leaves little doubt as to its date. Eudemus of Cyprus (who must be carefully distinguished from Aristotle's disciple Eudemus of Rhodes) died before Syracuse in 354 B.C. when Aristotle was about thirty and had been a member of the Academy for some thirteen years. The theme of the dialogue was that the death of Eudemus was the true fulfilment of the dream that had promised him a safe return to his home within five years, a promise which was fulfilled by his death. The argument for the soul's immortality was clearly based on the *Phaedo*, and, in particular, on the doctrine that the soul was not an attunement (*ἁρμονία*) of the body (fr. 45 Rose). We can also see the influence of Plato's earlier works in the myth of Silenus, which was plainly composed on the model of the speech of Lachesis in the tenth book of the *Republic*. We may infer with certainty that, at the age of thirty, Aristotle was still a Platonist and, what is more, a Platonist of an early type.

Another, and a more important work which must be referred to much the same date, is the *Protrepticus*, which was an exhortation to the philosophic life addressed to a certain Themison of Cyprus. We know something of this work from what we can learn of the *Hortensius* of Cicero, which had so much influence on St. Augustine at a later date. It is here that we have the first instance of Bywater's work on the 'exoteric' treatises of Aristotle; for he was able to restore large portions of the *Protrepticus* from the similarly entitled work of Iamblichus.¹ That is an extraordinary compilation. The greater part of it consists of extracts from Plato, but this is broken in the middle by a series of extracts from Aristotle, which Bywater was the first to identify as coming from the *Protrepticus*.

The most striking feature of the work was that it recommended in the

¹ *J. Phil.* ii (1869), 55 sqq.

strongest manner the contemplative life as the highest possible for those that are capable of it, and we shall see that this remained Aristotle's conviction throughout his life. He had no city, or none of any importance, and it was natural for an Ionian to take that view. Plato's attitude had been different. With Athenian politics he had little to do, but he had the foresight to see that the great struggle ahead was the preservation of the west for Greek civilization. With such ideas Aristotle had little sympathy, and the *Protrepticus* is chiefly interesting as showing how little he was influenced by them. In this work he upheld the claim of *φρόνησις* to be the leader of men, but it was still *φρόνησις* in the Platonic sense of the term, and not in that which he was to give it long afterwards himself.

III

In 348/7 B.C. Plato died, about eighty years old, and his nephew Speusippus succeeded him as head of the Academy. There was nothing now to keep Aristotle at Athens. He went to Asia Minor with Xenocrates, and the second period of his life begins. Once more we see a split between east and west which only the personality of Plato had been able to avert. There is no need to dwell upon the anecdotes about the succession to the Academy. Speusippus was an Athenian citizen, while Xenocrates and Aristotle were not, and it may well have seemed necessary at this time that the head of the Academy should be an Athenian who was legally capable of holding the property. At a later date, some way out of the difficulty must have been found, no doubt under Macedonian influence; for we find Xenocrates back at Athens as head of the Academy in 339, while Aristotle founded the Lyceum there in 335 B.C. For the present the interesting point is that the two leading men of Plato's school left Athens together for Asia Minor, where there was what may be fairly called a colony of the Academy under Coriscus and Erastus, who were settled at Assos and enjoyed the patronage of Hermias, tyrant of Atarneus, whom they had converted to Platonism. That is certainly significant, for it shows there was a real possibility of founding an Asiatic branch of the Academy in these regions. We know the circle of friends to whom Xenocrates and Aristotle went much better than we did, now that it is generally allowed that Plato's sixth epistle is genuine. The school had been founded by Coriscus and Erastus, who had been members of the Academy, and the epistle is addressed to them along with Hermias, whom Plato does not appear to know personally. Aristotle remained at Assos

for three years, but, on the execution of Hermias by the Persians, he removed to Mitylene in Lesbos, where he married Pythia, the daughter of Hermias.

This raises one or two interesting points. In the first book of the *Metaphysics* Aristotle has occasion to criticize Plato's theory of Forms in a very curious way. He speaks of it throughout as a doctrine which 'we' hold, even when he is criticizing it, and that can only mean that he still regarded himself as a member of the Academy. If so, the book must belong to the time when he was at Assos. The same thing seems to follow from the frequent references to Coriscus in certain works of Aristotle. They seem to imply that he was present at the lectures, and that is, of course, of the greatest importance in determining their date.

It may well be that Aristotle's call to superintend the education of Alexander in 342 B.C. was due to his intimacy with Hermias, who was certainly a Macedonian agent, as well as to his father's professional connexion with the Macedonian kings. Next to nothing is really known of Aristotle's work with Alexander. He says very little about him in his writings, and we do not really know how long they were together; but it is clear at least that Aristotle never understood his distinguished pupil. By 335 B.C. he was back at Athens, where he opened his school under the protection of the Macedonian governor Antipater.

Now this means that Aristotle was away from Athens for about twelve years, from the age of thirty-seven to that of forty-nine, and we can hardly be wrong in holding that these were the most important years of his life. At first, no doubt, he only thought of continuing Plato's work, but it is evident that the change came soon. For twenty years he had been overshadowed by the personality of his master; now it was high time for his native genius to show itself, if he had any. The Greeks were never in a hurry. Plato must have been forty when he founded the Academy, and the writings by which he is most familiar to us were all written before that, and had for their chief object to make Socrates known. Aristotle too was at first completely absorbed in his master, and there seems to be little doubt that it was Plato who started him on the lines he was to follow. It seems certain that, towards the end of his life, Plato had determined to direct the attention of his disciples to the study of animals and plants. That seems to follow from the fact that not only Aristotle, who had a natural bent in that direction, but also Plato's nephew, Speusippus, had turned their attention to biology. The achievements of Speusippus in this may not have amounted to

much, though he wrote a work entitled *Ὅμοια*, in which he made an attempt to found a classification of animals. The comic poets too made fun, in their own way, of the efforts of the Academy to establish a classification of animals and vegetables. But to Aristotle this new branch of inquiry seems to have come almost as a revelation. My colleague, Professor D'Arcy Thompson, has pointed out¹ that most of the species described by Aristotle belong to Asia Minor, and, in particular, to Lesbos, and, if that is so, it would settle the matter. On this point, it would appear that Professor Jaeger is wrong, and it may be noted that Coriscus appears not only in the logical treatises, but also in certain of the biological lectures.

In fact, if this is right, it is, I take it, the clue to the whole development of Aristotle. He was not a mathematician like Plato, but he found himself when Plato turned his attention to biology. Plato had never said anything of the doctrine of Forms (*ιδέαι, εἶδη*) in any work that he wrote after the foundation of the Academy, except once in the *Timaeus*, where it is mentioned by a professed Pythagorean, but Aristotle, of course, knew all about it from the *Phaedo* and the *Republic*, where it is expounded by Socrates. Of course he also knew, so far as that was possible for him, the mathematical form in which the doctrine was expounded by Plato in his later years. To Aristotle, when once he had become interested in biology, the mathematical form in which Plato had presented the theory ceased to have any meaning, and here once more we find Aristotle's Ionic nature asserting itself.

It is in the dialogue entitled *On Philosophy* that we find the first open breach with the Ideal Theory of Plato, and it was from this source alone that the Stoics and Epicureans of the next few generations knew what they knew about it. It was, in fact, a public announcement that Aristotle had a philosophy of his own to teach. From that point of view, it is, of course, a most serious loss, and we may be glad that it is gradually being repaired.² It is significant that the Platonic theory criticized is not that with which we are familiar in the *Phaedo* and the *Republic*, but that of what are called 'ideal numbers' (*εἰδητικοὶ ἀριθμοί*), a theory which we have to reconstruct as well as we can from what Aristotle tells us about it; for it finds no place in Plato's published works. In this dialogue, Aristotle spoke in person, and we possess a fragment of it (fr. 8 Rose), in which he said that he could not sympathize with the doctrine 'even

¹ *On Aristotle as a Biologist* (Herbert Spencer Lecture, Clarendon Press, 1913).

² A comparison of Bywater's paper in *J. Phil.* vii. 64, with the account of this dialogue given by Jaeger, pp. 125 sqq., will show how far this has proceeded.

if it is supposed that his opposition is due to a spirit of contentiousness'. That is a definite declaration enough. It is evident that this dialogue must be later than the first book of the *Metaphysics*, in which also the Platonic doctrine of Forms is criticized, but is spoken of throughout as a doctrine which 'we' hold. The only difference is that the dialogue *On Philosophy* was a public manifesto, while the criticism of the *Metaphysics* was intended for the school alone, and only saw the light long afterwards. It seems most natural to suppose that this breach with Platonism is connected with Aristotle's biological studies, though this is a point which I think Jaeger has missed. Yet surely it is here that we ought to look for the origin of the divergence between Plato and Aristotle. Even to-day we can see that mathematicians have comparatively little difficulty in appreciating Platonism, while biologists are apt to be annoyed by what strikes them as a certain unfairness to the objects of their own study. That was natural enough until last century, and it was perfectly intelligible in the fourth century B.C., but I should like to raise the question whether it is quite so natural to-day. I am neither a biologist nor a mathematician, but I cannot help wondering whether there is not, in the twentieth century, a tendency for their opposite points of view to come together. In the fourth century B.C. this no doubt seemed impossible, but I cannot help asking whether, if Aristotle had known the modern theory of evolution, he would have felt obliged to reject the Platonic theory so decidedly as he does. However that may be, there can be no doubt of this, that it was mainly Aristotle's passionate interest in biology that led him to drop the theory of 'Ideas' altogether, though it must never be forgotten that, even in his unpublished lectures, he always speaks of Plato with reverence, even when he feels obliged to differ from him. In later days, it was the Platonic Academy that commented laboriously on his works, and it is to its members that we owe most for the preservation and interpretation of them. It is possible, indeed, that the Neoplatonists ignored too much the radical differences between the two men; but it is a fact that they devoted themselves to the interpretation of Aristotle more than to that of Plato. They were at least dimly aware of the fact that Aristotle was the only source of our knowledge of Plato's later and more personal teaching.

There can, however, be no doubt that Aristotle's return to his Ionian predecessors had a wholly unfortunate effect on his general view of the world, and this has had unfortunate results. The *Physics*, the *De Caelo*, and the *De Generatione et Corruptione* do not by any

means represent such an advance on the Academy as his biological works do. In them everything depends upon the spherical earth being at rest in the centre of the universe while the starry heavens go round it once in twenty-four hours. There can be no doubt that the Academy had gone far beyond this, and that, under its influence, even the heliocentric theory had been evolved. It was just this that made Aristotle unacceptable to the great men of the Renaissance, and has stood in the way of a proper appreciation of him ever since. Aristotle in these matters was not Aristotle at his best, and his real greatness was as a biologist.

It would, however, take us too far to discuss these points in detail here, though I feel that I must say something more about what is often regarded as Aristotle's chief work, the *Metaphysics*. The very title of that work is of later date, and the word 'metaphysics' is never used by Aristotle himself. We have seen that Book I was certainly composed when he was lecturing to his school at Assos, and that implies that Books II and III belong to the same period, when Aristotle still felt that he was a member of the Academy, though he had abandoned its principal doctrine, the theory of Forms. But at this point all connexion apparently ceases, and with Book IV we come to a discussion of philosophical terminology, which appears to be an independent work, while the last two books contain a discussion, or rather two discussions, of the theory of ideal numbers held in the Academy, which does not appear to have any connexion with the rest of the work. Books V-VII seem to be of far later date than these; for they deal with a more important subject and seem to embody views which Aristotle held later in life. Book X is an entirely independent treatise, which appears to give an account of Aristotle's views on what he calls First Philosophy. The crux of the problem is certainly to be found here; but unhappily it must remain a crux. We do not know in the least whether the *Metaphysics* was ever intended by its author to be regarded as a single work, no doubt to be revised, or whether it simply consists of those parts of his writings which did not appear to his editors to find a natural place elsewhere. We can only say that the title it bears has given rise to the later term 'metaphysics', and that shows the importance of the matters it treats. But, as we have it, it is certainly not a coherent whole; it consists of fragments of very different date, and it shows more than anything else that Aristotle's philosophy was never completed. It would be out of place to say more of it here.

I do, however, feel bound before concluding to say something

about the *Ethics*. Every one knows that there are three works which bear this title in the Aristotelian *corpus*, the *Nicomachean Ethics*, the *Eudemian Ethics*, and the *Magna Moralia*. The last of these may be left out of account for the present, but the two first present a very real problem. During the nineteenth century most editors (including myself) acquiesced in the view that the *Nicomachean Ethics* was Aristotle's, while the *Eudemian Ethics* was ascribed to Eudemus, but of late this has been questioned and it has, in my opinion, been finally disproved by Jaeger. According to him, there are three well marked stages in Aristotle's moral philosophy, represented by (1) the *Protrepticus* which was published and represents the advanced Platonic period, (2) the *Eudemian Ethics* which belongs to the intermediate stage, and (3) the *Nicomachean Ethics*, which is one of Aristotle's latest works. This, he holds, is clear from the agreement of the *Eudemian Ethics* with the *Protrepticus*, especially as that work can now be supplemented from Iamblichus. Even apart from that, the reference (*B.* 1, 1218^b, 34) to ἐξωτερικοὶ λόγοι proves that the work is genuinely Aristotelian. That it was written during his residence in Asia Minor seems to follow from the appearance in it of Coriscus (1220^a, 19 and 1240^b, 25).

That the *Eudemian Ethics* comes between the *Protrepticus* and the *Nicomachean Ethics* appears, Jaeger holds, from many things, above all, perhaps, from the way in which the 'three lives', the theoretic, the practical, and the apolaustic are shown to be derived from wisdom (φρόνησις), goodness (ἀρετή), and pleasure (ἡδονή) quite in the Platonic manner. It is obvious that this could find no place in the *Nicomachean Ethics*, where the old Platonic use of φρόνησις as equivalent to σοφία is given up and replaced by a distinction between speculative σοφία and practical φρόνησις. It is to be observed, however, that the *Nicomachean Ethics* takes a much higher view of σοφία or intellectual wisdom than the other. It is not, in fact, an adequate account of the matter to say, as Jaeger does (p. 250), that the theoretic life is only brought in at the end of the *Nicomachean Ethics* without ethical goodness being made dependent upon it. That is true, no doubt, but it is very far from being the whole truth. It is quite in accordance with the philosophical method which Aristotle had learnt from Plato to keep the main purpose of a discussion to the end; and, when the contemplative life is discussed in the *Nicomachean Ethics* that is done with an ardour and intensity which cannot be paralleled in any other part of the work. That, too, I take it, is why φρόνησις or 'practical wisdom' is given only a secondary importance in the sixth book. The whole treatise is

intended to lead up to the assertion of the unique pre-eminence of speculative wisdom or *σοφία*.

In fact, if the last few pages of the *Nicomachean Ethics* are genuine—and no one has suggested that they are not—we find that the ultimate good for man is just the exercise of the theoretic or contemplative ‘part’ of the soul. The degradation of *φρόνησις* or practical wisdom in Book VI seems intended to exalt the position of *σοφία* or theoretical wisdom, and its activity *θεωρία*, even higher than before. If, then, the *Nicomachean Ethics* belongs to the last years of Aristotle’s life, as Jaeger holds it does, we shall be driven to conclude that, at the time of his death, Aristotle was on the point of teaching a system in which everything was to be subordinated to the theoretic or contemplative life. I would suggest that the same idea may be used to interpret the account of *νοῦς* in the third book of the *De Anima*. That has led to endless controversy, but I venture to think that the apparent discrepancy between this and the earlier books is due to the same cause. The apparent degradation of our psychical faculties which impresses us in the first two books of the *De Anima* is like the apparent degradation of *φρόνησις* in the sixth book of the *Ethics*, and is meant to prepare the way for the exaltation of Mind (*νοῦς*) just as the lower position assigned to practical wisdom (*φρόνησις*) in the other case is intended to prepare the way for the exaltation of theoretical wisdom (*σοφία*). It is very certainly characteristic of Greek philosophical writings to keep the main point till the end or near it; and, if we argue from the neglect of certain ideas in the earlier portion of such works, we are very apt to go wrong. On the other hand, if we read on to the end and then look back, we shall often find things which have appeared difficult to understand at first appear in a new light.

Only we must remember all the time that, in trying to understand these works of Aristotle, we are not dealing with published works, but with lectures. If we remember that, we shall not be at all clear that Jaeger is right in saying that, for the average Greek of that time, the method of these works was strange and repellent (p. 360). Though the average Athenian might no doubt find them so, we must always remember that Aristotle was not an Athenian, and that his hearers were even less so. We have only to glance at the Ionic scientific literature of a century earlier, such as the treatise of Hippocrates *Περὶ ἀέρων ὑδάτων τόπων*, to feel that he is carrying on the traditional Ionic scientific style and the traditional Ionic attitude to the world. I cannot feel that Jaeger is right in saying (p. 360) that there was anything fundamentally new in Aristotle’s

attitude to such things. He seems more nearly right in saying (p. 434) that Aristotle had also the world-horizon of the Ionian, of which no Athenian ever dreamt, though I should certainly except Plato who was an Athenian, and yet combined an even wider sympathy than Aristotle's with an interest in practical matters which Aristotle showed himself incapable of feeling. Here, too, Aristotle is a typical Ionian, though he had lived for twenty years under the influence of an Athenian of pan-Hellenic sympathies.

IV

Nowhere does this appear more clearly than at the end of his life. He had been the tutor of Alexander the Great, but he seldom mentions him. He does not seem to have been conscious of the fact that his position at Athens during the last thirteen years of his life depended on Antipater. And yet, when Antipater left Athens and Alexander died (323 B.C.) he had to leave Athens at once, and went to Chalcis in Euboea, where he too died soon afterwards in his sixty-third year. It is worthy of notice that Plato had been head of the Academy till he was eighty, while Socrates was just over seventy when he was put to death at the height of his powers. The Greeks of this time lived to great ages, and there can be no doubt at all that Aristotle's comparatively early death has deprived us of that final revision of his system which he would certainly have undertaken, and of which, as has been indicated, some traces can be discovered even now. Most of the best of what we have belongs to the time when he was not at Athens, and the last thirteen years of his life represent an incomplete period which was brought to an end by political events with which he had nothing to do, and in which, surprising as it may seem, he took no interest. I venture to think that what is most wanted is a study of his thought in these last years, for which, as I have tried to show, there are really certain data which Professor Jaeger has ignored. According to him, it would seem that Aristotle spent his last years in anticipating the learning and science of Alexandria, and in some respects that is certainly true. I feel convinced, however, that it is not the whole truth, or even the most important part of it. I believe, on the contrary, that it is still possible to ascertain more than has yet been found out as to the chronological order of his works. That has been successfully done in the case of Plato, and, though it may be more difficult in that of Aristotle, I have little doubt that it could be done here too. Then, I believe, we should see that the latest

stage of Aristotle's philosophy was rather different from what it appears to be in the valuable work which Professor Jaeger has already given us. No doubt he is the first writer who has attempted to follow up his development, but there is still, I think, something to be done if we could only determine what were his latest writings. It is certain at least that the man who wrote the last pages of the *Nicomachean Ethics* had still something more to say when his work was prematurely interrupted.